The Washington Star
Portfolio
SECTION E
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1978

TV TODAY

# Front and Center: A Day of Specials

By Bernie Harrison
Washington Star Staff Writer

The specials take over today, all day, until the late news — and there are going to be arguments not only about what to watch, but what you're watching.

At the top of the list tonight — Part 1 of NBC's mini-series, "King," (WRC-4 at 9) a "dramatization based on the life and the accomplishments" of Martin Luther King, Jr. It's the subject of our TV magazine cover today, and as our previewer, Mary Ellen Perry, advised in her preview printed here Friday, the dramatist, Abby Mann, has rearranged some real events and made up characters and conversation in order to advance the story.

If that doesn't bother you (as it has already bothered many of King's colleagues), sit back and enjoy a virtuoso performance by Paul Winfield as King. I've admired this actor long before "Sounder," when I first spotted him in Jim Garner's "Nichols," and the preparation and energy Winfield invested in the part, capturing the mannerisms and speech patterns, shine through like a beacon. Our previewer's summary: It's long, with several slow spots, but the production is excellent, the writing good, and the large supporting cast superior. Tonight's episode takes King from his student days in Boston through his courtship and marriage to Coretta Scott (Cicely Tyson) to his early days as leader of the Montgomery bus boycott, after which he becomes an FBI target.